

Application No.: 10/578,626
Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116
Reply to Office Action dated May 12, 2009
August 10, 2009

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please substitute the following claims for the pending claims with the same numbers respectively:

Claim 1 (Currently amended): An aqueous solution of a chromium salt comprising:

an oxalic acid content of 8% by weight or less relative to chromium,

wherein the chromium salt is a chromium chloride,

wherein the aqueous solution contains a basic chromium chloride represented by the composition formula $\text{Cr}(\text{OH})_x\text{Cl}_y$ (wherein $0 < x \leq 2$, $1 \leq y < 3$, and $x + y = 3$);

wherein a total organic carbon content in the aqueous solution of the chromium salt is 0.5 to 4% by weight;

wherein the aqueous solution of the chromium salt is produced by a process comprising the steps of:

adding an organic reducing agent composed of a monohydric alcohol or a dihydric alcohol to an aqueous solution of chromic acid to reduce part of a chromic acid in advance in a first stage of reaction;

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mixing hydrochloric acid and the organic reducing agent to form a mixture; and

adding the mixture to the aqueous solution of chromic acid so as to complete the reaction.

Claims 2-4 (Cancelled):

Claim 5 (Previously presented): The aqueous solution of the chromium salt according to claim 1, wherein a specific gravity at 20°C is 1.35 to 1.44, and a molar ratio (Cl/Cr) of chlorine to chromium is 1 or more and less than 3.

Claim 6 (Previously presented): The aqueous solution of the chromium salt according to claim 1, wherein a concentration in terms of Cr is 8.2% to 14% by weight.

Claims 7-23 (Cancelled):

Claim 24 (Previously presented): A method for producing an aqueous solution of a chromium salt including an oxalic acid content of 8% by weight or less relative to chromium, wherein the chromium salt is a chromium chloride, and the aqueous solution contains a basic chromium chloride represented by the composition

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formula $\text{Cr}(\text{OH})_x\text{Cl}_y$ (wherein $0 < x \leq 2$, $1 \leq y < 3$, and $x + y = 3$), comprising the steps of:

adding an organic reducing agent composed of a monohydric alcohol or a dihydric alcohol to an aqueous solution of chromic acid to reduce part of a chromic acid in advance in a first stage of reaction;

mixing hydrochloric acid and the organic reducing agent to form a mixture; and

adding the mixture to the aqueous solution of chromic acid so as to complete the reaction.

Claim 25 (New): The method for producing an aqueous solution of a chromium salt according to claim 24, wherein said step of adding the mixture to the aqueous solution of chromic acid so as to complete the reaction includes obtaining the aqueous solution having a specific gravity at 20°C which is 1.35 to 1.44, and a molar ratio (Cl/Cr) of chlorine to chromium which is 1 or more and less than 3.

Claim 26 (New): The method for producing an aqueous solution of a chromium salt according to claim 24, wherein said step of adding the mixture to the aqueous solution of chromic acid so as to complete the reaction includes obtaining the

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aqueous solution having a concentration in terms of Cr which is
8.2% to 14% by weight.